

IRS News Release

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IRS Announces Additional Agreements to Assist Disaster Victims

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service announced today that additional tax professional organizations have agreed to partner with it to provide assistance to taxpayers at local disaster recovery centers established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The National Association of Enrolled Agents (NAEA) and the American Association of Attorney-Certified Public Accountants (AAA-CPA) are the latest organizations to join IRS employees in staffing disaster recovery centers and assisting taxpayers affected by Hurricane Katrina. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) signed a similar agreement with the IRS earlier this month.

“These partnerships will provide important help to taxpayers who need assistance after the hurricane,” said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson.

When the President designates an area to receive federal disaster assistance, FEMA opens local disaster recovery centers where individuals and businesses may register for disaster aid. IRS assigns employees to staff these local centers to provide tax assistance to taxpayers. Currently, employees and volunteers are providing tax assistance in dozens of FEMA sites.

Assistance includes aiding with the preparation of tax returns and claims, providing copies of transcripts and returns, distributing disaster relief kits and answering questions about casualty losses and other issues.

“Enrolled agents are in a unique position to help victims of Katrina by providing tax assistance alongside IRS staff at local disaster recovery centers,” said Frank Degan, NAEA President and an enrolled agent. “We want to use our expertise in taxation to alleviate the financial concerns of disaster victims. For example, taxpayers who have suffered casualty losses in Presidentially-declared areas have an option of filing amended 2004 returns now. This will give taxpayers cash sooner, when they need it most. We can help taxpayers understand their options and ease their minds as much as possible.”

The NAEA is a professional society with 11,000 members. Enrolled agents are licensed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before all administrative levels of the IRS, including examination, collection and appeals functions. The NAEA’s mission is to help its members maintain the highest level of knowledge, skill, and

professionalism in all areas of taxation so that they may effectively represent the positions of their clients.

“The AAA-CPA is proud to join with the IRS and other professional organizations in providing the technical expertise and skills necessary to help people with disaster related tax issues,” said Stephen Scott, AAA-CPA President. “Our members are uniquely qualified to assist hurricane victims in advising them of their options and benefits with respect to our nation’s tax laws and the special efforts the IRS is making to provide relief.”

The AAA-CPA was founded in 1964 to protect the rights of those qualified as both attorneys and certified public accountants and to advance the professions of law and accountancy. The association has over 1,200 members and 14 state associations and local chapters nationwide.

More information regarding disaster tax relief may be found on the IRS’s Web site at irs.gov.